

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND—Because that clause only provided for the appointment of three scrutineers to act for both parties and did not give them the right to appoint delegates or representatives, because those three scrutineers in the clause drafted by the Minister of Justice had the right to attend at the taking of the vote, at the making of the affidavit, etc., but it is quite evident that the three scrutineers could not be in different places on the same day, and one would require to go to England, another to Flanders another to Belgium.

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—Is that not complicating the working out of the Bill? It seems to me that every additional clause of that character which you add to the Bill makes it more impracticable than it might otherwise be, and when you consider that the armies may be scattered hundreds and hundreds of miles from each other it makes the working out of the Bill still more difficult.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND—The hon. gentleman apparently realizes that the Bill will be very difficult to carry out.

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—I think so, and I think you are complicating it further by adding the clause.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND—We must not forget that we are doing it practically blindly. We are asking regimental officers to do work which they may refuse to do. We are asking regimental officers who may be Canadians to carry on the election, and these officers may spurn the idea of carrying on an election in the trenches; but if the officers will act, it seems to me we should add some other kind of safeguards which will insure the proper taking and registering of votes.

Hon. Mr. CLORAN—The more the discussion proceeds the more ridiculous the Bill becomes. The hon. senator has just read an amendment to the Bill that eight days' notice should be given before the voting. Bear this in mind and study it. Supposing the House is dissolved the 1st of June, nomination day is fixed for a certain date, say 23rd June, and the election on 1st July. What happens? No man can vote or make up his mind until nomination has closed. No man here in Canada can tell who he is going to vote for; he will not know until the candidates are declared for the Labour party, the Socialist party or any other party.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED.

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—That is provided for in the Bill.

Hon. Mr. CLORAN—These provisions, as far as Canada is concerned, are sane, but absolutely insane as far as the soldiers abroad are concerned. The provisions of the electoral law of Canada are sane. The provisions in this Bill for casting votes in the trenches are absolutely insane. How will a commanding officer, who is supposed to be a returning officer in the election, tell who is candidate in such and such a constituency, without being given notice by the Government? How will he be able to establish that there are two Government candidates, and no opposition candidate, and so on? And when the High Commissioner in London gets his information from the Dominion of Canada, he transfers it to the paymaster, and the paymaster has to transfer it to somebody else, to the captain of a brigade, or to a regimental officer of any kind, and that takes time, and then these men go into the trenches where they are fighting for us, for our country and the Empire. They pull the poor men away from the trigger of his gun, and say, "Who are you going to vote for?" The people of the country see the absurdity of it, but hon. gentlemen with as much common sense as the ordinary citizens outside these walls tell the country that this Bill is not in favour of the soldier and that it is to his detriment. You have forty men in a trench, and a returning officer goes into a trench and wants them to vote. You have twenty Liberals and twenty Conservatives. You are going to have a vote among them right on the spot. They are fighting the common enemy, and then you invite them to come and fight political battles on behalf of Canada. There is going to be a squabble in that camp. Tories and Grits will be fighting among themselves. As the hon. gentleman from Toronto said, this is most vicious legislation. It is a freak, a farce and a fraud.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—I would point out to my hon. friend that the amendment proposed would be unworkable on account of its very complicated provisions, and if my hon. friend has any intention, as he apparently has, of attempting to improve this Bill, I think the amendment should not go any further than what was contained in the original Bill.